

City Commission High Level Briefing

September 10, 2024



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

**BRIDGE TO
OUR FUTURE**

GRAND RAPIDS
COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN

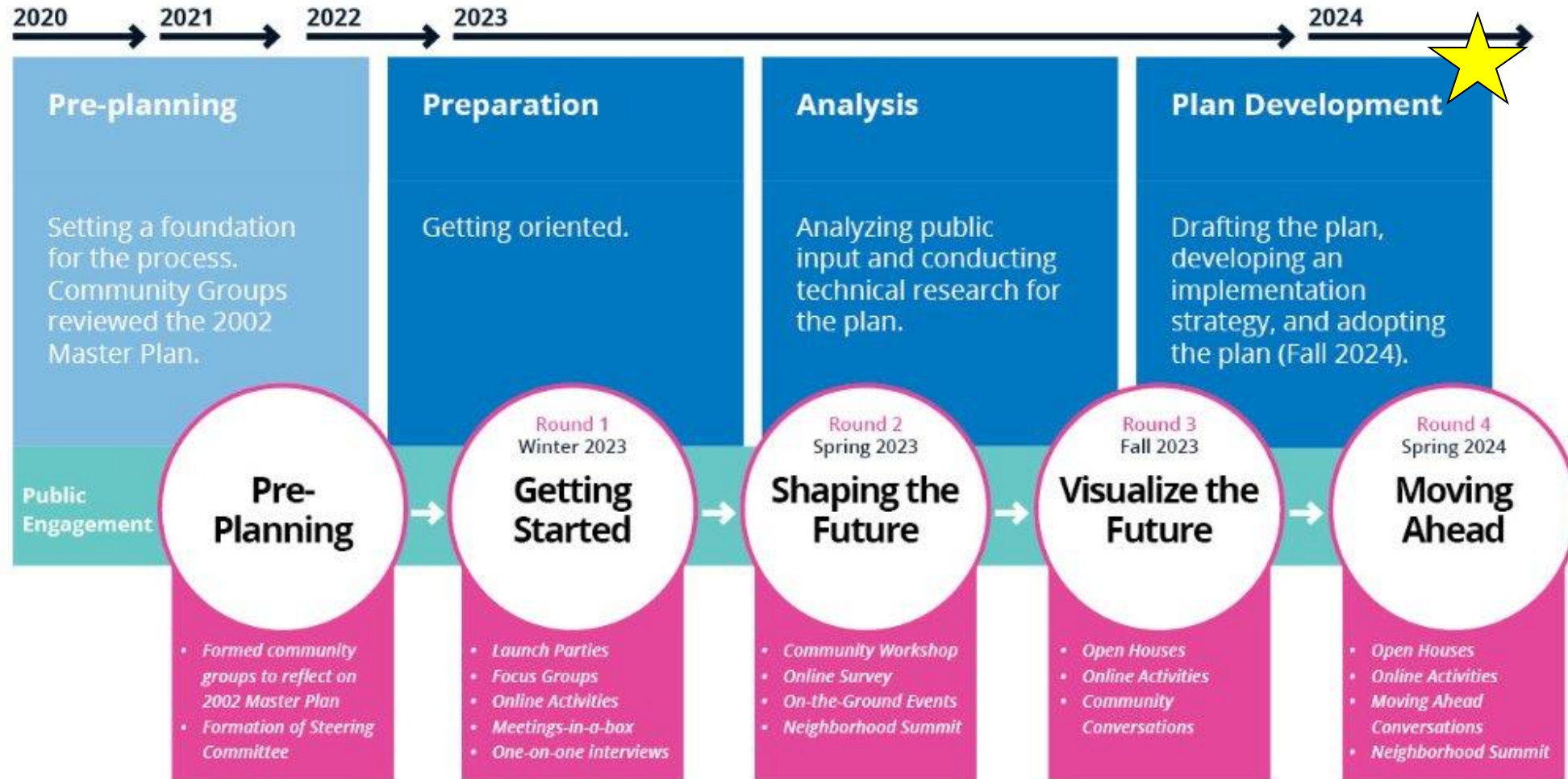
Agenda

- 1. CMP Overview**
- 2. Planning Commission Discussion Recap**
- 3. Chapters 1-4 Plan Content**
- 4. Public Comment**
- 5. Adoption Process**

What is a Community Master Plan (CMP)?

- 1. The blueprint for how a community grows and evolves set forth by the Planning Commission and adopted by City Commission**
- 2. Builds community pride and defines a long-range vision for the future, typically 20 years**
- 3. Describes the desired physical development of the community**
- 4. Addresses topics such as population, economy, housing, transportation, facilities, and land use**
- 5. Integrates solid technical analysis with robust public input**
- 6. Necessary for a valid Zoning Ordinance, which brings the Plan to life for the community**

CMP Process Timeline



Plan Framework

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

In the next 20 years...

Grand Rapids aspires to build a sustainable city of inclusion, where people in all neighborhoods have the opportunity to live in safe and affordable housing, to move throughout the city in a variety of ways, to earn a living wage through meaningful job choices, and to gather together in vibrant spaces that celebrate our unique cultures and histories.

The vision is an expression of the community's future and was tested in Round 2 of public engagement.

COMMUNITY VALUE THREADS



Equity: Where all residents have access to resources that allow for opportunity, influence, and positive life outcomes no matter their starting point.



Safety: Where all people are secure and protected in all communities no matter where they live or come from, or what they look like.



Vibrancy: A variety of amenities, including arts, culture, and recreation opportunities, that activate and contribute to the energy of the city year-round.



Culture: Traditions and experiences that originate from one's background and lived experiences and can be shared and celebrated with others.



Sustainability: Balancing growth, environmental stewardship, and well-being in a way that fulfills current and ongoing needs and opportunities of future generations.

Values reflect, at a high level, what the community cares about. The value threads are woven throughout the plan chapters.

COMMUNITY GOAL AREAS

Goals are desired outcomes expressed in simple terms. Each goal area is a chapter of the plan.

- 1. Great Neighborhoods:** Connected and diverse neighborhoods where residents can thrive. Grand Rapids neighborhoods will have access to housing, retail, open space, and more that meet the needs of residents in all phases of life.
- 2. Vital Business Districts:** A network of unique and diverse businesses in all neighborhoods. Vital business districts will provide a variety of products, services, amenities, and safe, walkable places that attract people.
- 3. A Strong Economy:** An economy that offers a prosperous quality of life. The Grand Rapids economy will offer a range of employers and job choices so that everyone can access and earn a living wage.
- 4. Balanced Mobility:** A transportation network that is safe, reliable, and affordable. Grand Rapids will have mobility options that include a variety of ways to move about the city and beyond.
- 5. Development Character:** A strong sense of place through high quality design. New development will improve or support the existing fabric of each neighborhood.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are strategic direction that organizes the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations include projects, policies, and programs to achieve desired outcomes.

Planning Commission Discussion

PC held Deep Dive #1 on August 22

Support

- *Voiced overall support for the recommendations in Chapters 1-4.*

Slight Revisions

- *Suggested clarifying and expanding some recommendations.*
- *Suggested reorganizing some recommendations.*

General

- *Staff will be meeting with departments that have a role in implementation to ensure alignment with other policies under development (i.e. updated Stormwater Management Manual).*

Great Neighborhoods

Chapter 1

1.A Create complete and stable neighborhoods.

The recommendations under this objective:

- *Provide safe, stable, and affordable housing options.*
- *Support the creation and preservation of affordable housing.*
- *Improve public involvement and information about new development.*

1.B Expand the variety of housing types and price points.

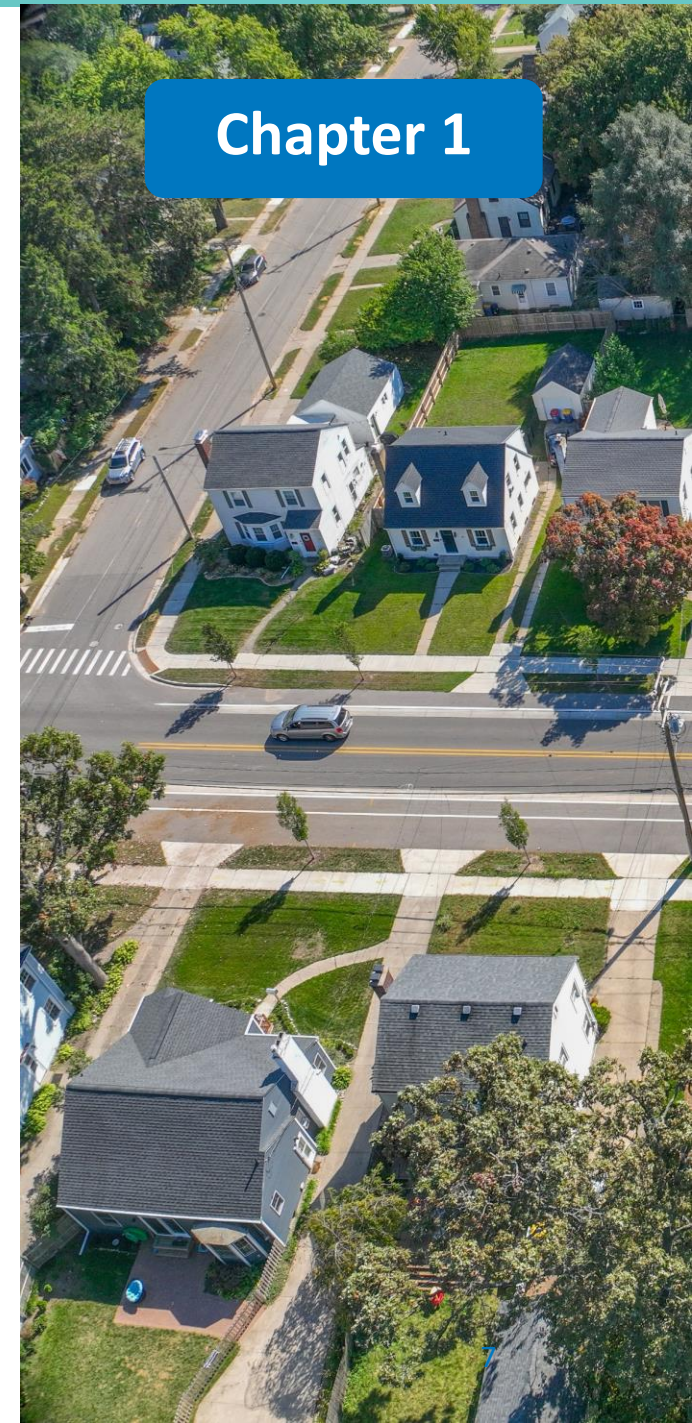
The recommendations under this objective:

- *Allow more housing types in all neighborhoods*
- *Provide guidance for developing an anti-displacement strategy*
- *Support small-scale developer training*

1.C. Integrate sustainable practices into development projects.

The recommendations under this objective:

- *Promote accessibility and sustainability investments in Grand Rapids neighborhoods.*
- *Prioritize equity in new housing and public spaces.*
- *Support implementation of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.*



Proposed Bold Changes

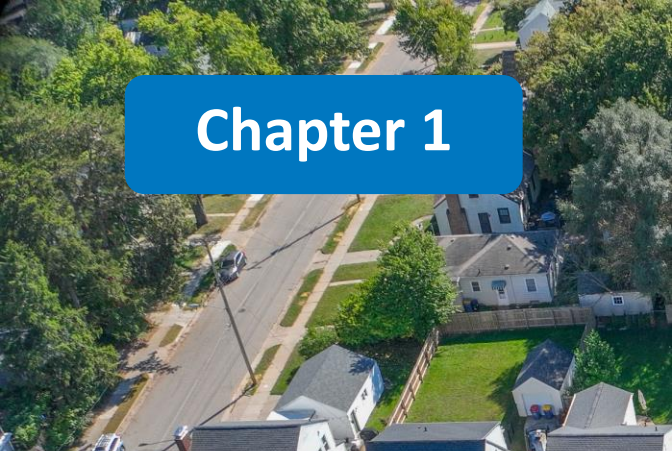
The following CMP recommendations would result in a notable policy change:


1.B.2 Allow a greater variety of housing types in low-density residential zone districts.

- *Allow duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and ADUs by-right in residential zoning districts.*

1.B.3 Allow higher density residential in the Mid-Century and Modern Era neighborhoods.

- *Allow up to six units on lots fronting Link Residential and Network Residential streets in residential zoning districts.*

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- Chapter 1
- This recommendation expands upon the recent housing policy changes.
 - Current Zoning allows these housing types with Planning Commission approval in most instances.
 - Other considerations remain in place – density, greenspace, setbacks, etc.

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- This recommendation expands upon the recent housing policy changes that allows up to six units by-right on higher volume corridors within TN neighborhoods.
 - Current Zoning allows these housing types in MCN and MON with Planning Commission approval.
 - Other considerations remain in place – density, greenspace, setbacks, etc.



Vital Business Districts

Chapter 2

2.A Support compact centers that provide a mix of uses.

The recommendations under this objective:

- *Focus dense development along bus routes and where more transportation options are available.*
- *Support infill development.*

2.B Improve the accessibility of business districts.

The recommendations under this objective:

- *Create shorter blocks to make business districts more walkable.*
- *Support options for travel other than a personal vehicle.*

2.C Broaden and enhance opportunities for local services, amenities, and cultural assets.

The recommendations under this objective:

- *Support public art, sustainable design, and other investments in business districts.*



Proposed Bold Changes

The following CMP recommendations would result in a notable policy change:

2.A.4 Support taller commercial buildings in commercial districts.

- *Raise the maximum height of commercial buildings in the MCN and MON neighborhood classifications and NOS district to encourage density in these commercial districts.*

2.B.1 Require a plan to encourage people to use modes of transportation other than driving alone when large developments are proposed within nodes identified on in the Conceptual Development Framework.

- *Create requirements for new development or alterations to buildings over a unit count threshold to provide a Transportation Demand Management plan.*



Strong Economy

Chapter 3

3.A Increase the density of high-wage jobs and decrease the wage gap in Grand Rapids.

The recommendations under this objective:

- *Support small scale manufacturing and create spaces for entrepreneurial activity.*
- *Direct new life science and medical uses to the Medical Mile to encourage efficiency and innovation.*

3.B Ensure a wide range of residents can access jobs.

The recommendations under this objective:

- *Improve broadband access across the city.*
- *Consider new uses for obsolete or underused industrial and commercial properties.*

3.C Balance economic growth with priorities for the environment.

The recommendations under this objective:

- *Decrease the impact of industrial uses on nearby neighborhoods.*
- *Promote sustainable industries and the “green economy.”*
- *Continue brownfield remediation efforts.*

Proposed Bold Changes

The following CMP recommendations would result in a notable policy change:

3.B.3 Reposition underutilized commercial retail properties to support non-retail businesses.

- *Expand the allowable uses in areas with commercial and retail sites, such as Community Activity Centers, including research and development and light manufacturing that doesn't impact nearby residential uses (e.g., 28th Street SE).*

3.B.4 Consider a hybrid business use category within Innovation Districts identified on the Future Character and Land Use map.

- *Restructure and refine use categories to focus on impact.*

Balanced Mobility

Chapter 4

4.A Design and maintain streets that are safe for all road users.

The recommendations under this objective:

- *Direct improvements to streets and intersections with high crash rates.*

4.B Support viable transportation options that are affordable, accessible, and meet community members' needs.

The recommendations under this objective:

- *Promote transportation options other than personal vehicles.*
- *Invest in transit, walking, and bicycling infrastructure.*

4.C Coordinate land use and transportation decisions.

The recommendations under this objective:

- *Reduce space for cars, such as parking lots, to support more compact, walkable development.*
- *Prioritize riding transit, walking, and bicycling in new development.*
- *Manage the way space along the curb is used for parking, loading, drop-off, and other activities.*



Proposed Bold Changes

Chapter 4

The following CMP recommendations would result in a notable policy change:

4.C.1 Reduce minimum parking requirements to support compact growth patterns.

- *Allow vehicle parking reductions or eliminations as an incentive to encourage infill development and respond to market conditions, especially when located on a transit route, on streets that identify pedestrians as priority users in the Vital Streets Plan, or in Neighborhood Centers.*
- *Allow by-right reduction in parking in more situations and expand the opportunity to waive parking regulations to more development situations.*

4.C.2 Limit the size of surface parking lots.

- *Set maximum sizes on modified lots. This could be regulated by impervious areas or the number of parking spaces.*
- *Restrict the creation of new surface parking to prioritize space for people, especially downtown and in activity centers.*



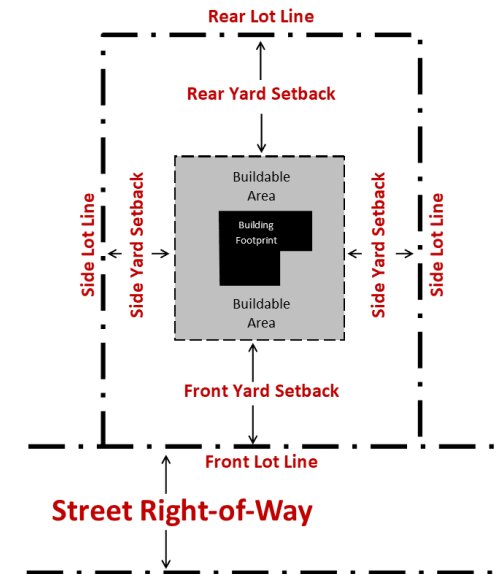
Public Comment

One comment was received during Deep Dive #1 on August 22 with the Planning Commission:

1. **Concern for the number of references to setbacks in the Design Guidelines contained in Chapter 5.**
 - Shared experience as a small-scale developer that has struggled to build on small lots, an issue that could be exacerbated by additional setback requirements.
 - Expressed concern for setbacks being codified after adoption of the CMP.

Zoning Ordinance Definition: "Setback" means the minimum distance required by this Chapter, measured from the front, side or rear lot line and/or right-of way line which describes the point at which the nearest part of the applicable building, structure, or sign, measured perpendicularly to the property line and/or right-of-way line shall be places, unless otherwise permitted by this Chapter.

Additional comments received will be shared and discussed with the Planning Commission.



Adoption Process Timeline

Proposed Community Master Plan - City Commission and Planning Commission Meetings

(Schedule is tentative and subject to change pending the actions of the PC and CC.)



Questions?



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